

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16737

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH

SUBJECT: MRTG ATTITUDES ON US FORCE REDUCTIONS

REF: (A) BANGKOK 16579

(B) BANGKOK 16705

1. THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHAROONPHAN (ISARANGKON NA
AYUTTHAYA) TOLD THE PRESS OCTOBER 25 THAT RTG TARGET IS FOR
FURTHER WITHDRAWALS OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES TO BE

CONTINUED STEADILY UNTIL WITHDRAWAL IS COMPLETED. HE
STRESSED THAI SOVEREIGNTY TO BRING ABOUT AMERICAN WITH-
DRAWAL, BUT EMPHASIZED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD CONTINUE
STEP BY STEP "DEPENDING ON THE NECESSITY OF THE SITUATION"
(FULL TEXT REPORTED REF B).

2. ACCORDING TO OCTOBER 26 BANGKOK POST REPORT, DEPUTY
FOREIGN MINISTER GENERAL CHARTCHAI ON SAME OCCASION TOLD
THE PRESS THAT "US SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER HAD
ASKED HIM WHEN HE WAS IN THE STATES RECENTLY ABOUT THE
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BASES, AND WAS PREPARED TO DO ANYTHING THAT THAI WANTED.

HE SAID THAT 'IF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WITHDRAW THEIR FORCES FROM LAOS AND CAMBODIA AND DO NOT THREATEN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES THERE WOULD BE NO MORE NEED FOR AMERICAN FORCES IN THAILAND'. COMMENT: USIS STAFFER WHO ATTENDED CHAROONPHAND'S NEWS CONFERENCE HAS NO RECORD OF CHARTCHAI STATEMENT, WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN AN ASIDE IN RESPONSE TO QUERY FROM THE BANGKOK POST REPORTER. IT IS UNCLEAR FROM NEWS STORY WHETHER INNERQUOTE TING NEED FOR AMERICAN FORCES TO NVA WITHDRAWALS WAS ATTRIBUTED BY CHARTCHAI TO SECSTATE, OR WAS CHARTCHAI STATEMENT OF OWN VIEWS. EMBASSY FINDS ITSELF EMBARRASSED IN CONVERSATION WITH RTG OFFICIALS OVER OUR CONTINUED LACK OF DOCUMENTARY REPORT ON CHARTCHAI MEETING WITH SECRETARY SEPTEMBER 26 IN NEW YORK. END COMMENT.

3. THE NATION FRONT-PAGED ITS ACCOUNT OF CHAROONPHAND'S PRESS CONFERENCE UNDER HEADLINE "TOTAL US PULLOUT DEFINITE" AND SOME NEWS SERVICES MAY READ MORE INTO THESE STATEMENTS THAN WE BELIEVE CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT.

4. COMMENT: WE DO NOT INTERPRET CHAROONPHAND STATEMENT AS INDICATING ANY CHANGE NOW IN OUR ESTABLISHED ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING RTG ON AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE HERE. AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED NATURE OF CURRENT FORCE REDUCTION TALKS WITH NEW FOREIGN MINISTER ON OCTOBER 20, FOLLOWING LINE SET FORTH REF A, AND PROMISED TO KEEP MFA INFORMED; CHAROONPHAND INDICATED HIS CONCURRENCE IN THIS PROCEDURE. GENERAL MELLEN AND EMBASSY OFFICERS PLAN TO MEET KRIANGSAK EARLY NEXT WEEK FOR DISCUSSION OF AMERICAN PRESENCE WITHIN CONTEXT OF GUIDELINES DISCUSSED REF A. AMBASSADOR WILL BE DISCUSSING MATTER WITH PRIME MINISTER SANYA ON MONDAY AND WILL ALSO BE SEEKING HIS CONCURRENCE IN OUR PROCEEDING IN ACCORDANCE WITH REF A CONCEPT. UNGER

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